

Message Text

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PAGE 01 SAIGON 06750 191116 Z

44

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 OMB-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-09 H-02

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15

USIA-12 IO-12 AID-20 RSR-01 /115 W
----- 112035

R 190845 Z APR 73

FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 402

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMCONSUL BIEN HOA

AMCONSUL CAN THO

CINCPAC

AMCONSUL DANANG

AMCONSUL NHA TRANG

AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

USDEL JEC PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAIGON 6750

CINCPACFOR POLAD

EO 11652 GDS

TAGS: PINT, VS

SUBJECT: SENATOR LE CHAU LOC COMMENTS ON THE ORGANIZATION
OF THE FREEDOM PARTY

1. IN A CONVERSATION APR 16 WITH AN EMBASSY OFFICER, SENATOR
LE CHAU LOC OFFERED THE FOLLOWING COMMENTS ON THE NEW CATHOLIC-
OREINTATED FREDDOM PARTY, A COALITION OF THE NHAN XA PARTY, THE
BONG HUE (LILY) GROUP IN THE SENATE, AND THE GREATER SOLIDARITY
FORCE. HE SAID THAT HE HAD BEEN CHANGED WITH THE TASK OF
ORGANIZING THE PARTY NATIONALLY.

THREE MONTHS TRIAL PERIOD

2. LOC WAS PROCEEDING ON THE ASSUMPTION THAT THE PARTY CAN BE
ORGANIZED SUCCESSFULLY, BUT AT THE SAME TIME HE RECOGNIZED THE
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PAGE 02 SAIGON 06750 191116 Z

POSSIBILITY OF FAILURE. HE REMARKED THAT HE HAD ALREADY DRAFTED A NOTICE OF DISSOLUTION OF THE PARTY, TO BE USED ONLY IF ORGANIZATIONAL EFFORTS FAILED. HE HAS GIVEN HIMSELF THREE MONTH (I. E. UNTIL MID- JULY) TO SEE WHAT CAN BE DONE. MUCH DEPENDS ON THE ATTITUDE OF THE GOVERNMENT, AND ALSO ON THE PARTY' S ABILITY TO OBTAIN FINANCES. LACK OF FUNDS, HE SAID, WAS A PRINCIPAL OBSTACLE.

3. INLOC' S VIEW, THE MEMBERS OF THE COMPONENT GROUPS IN THE FREEDOM PARTY WERE BEGINNING TO SHED THEIR OLD TENDANCY TO THINK SOLELY OF THEIR OWN GROUP' S INTEREST, AND NOW SHOWING WILLINGNESS TO WRK FOR THE COMMON CAUSE OF THE FREEDOM PARTY. THIS WAS AN ENCOURAGING SIGN, BUT OBVIOUSLY MORE WAS NEEDED. LOC SAID HE WAS READY TO SET UP PARTY HEADQUARTERS IN JUST 17 PROVINCES, 11 LESS THAN THE NUMBER NEEDED FOR QUALIFY IN UNDER DL 060. EVEN IN THESE 17 PROVINCES,

LOC INDICATED, MORE WORK WAS REQUIRED TO MEET THE LEGAL REQUIREMENTS.

THE FREEDOM PARTY AND THE UPPER HOUSE ELECTION

4. ASKED IF HE THOUGHT THE FREEDOM PARTY COULD QUALIFY IN TIME TO FIELD A LIST FOR THE UPPER HOUSE ELECTION, LOC INDICATED THAT THIS WOULD BE AN UP- HILL FIGHT. IN FACT, HE SEEMED RESIGNED TO THE POSSIBILITY OF A DEMOCRACY PARTY SWEEP IN THE ELECTION. THE FREEDOM PARTY WAS ORGANIZING WITH A LONGER TIME- FRAME IN MIND, DESPITE THE MID- JULY CUT OFF DATE HE HAD SET FOR HIMSELF.

5. COMMENT: ALTHOUGH LOC' S OVERT ATTITUDE STRESSED A POSITIVE APPROACH TO THE FREEDOM PARTY' S CHANCES, HIS TONE WAS ONE OF UNCERTAINTY. EVEN HIS REMARK THAT THE COMPONENT ELEMENTS OF THE PARTY WERE BEGINNING TO SUBMERGE THEIR SEPARATE INTERESTS IN THE COMMON CAUSE WAS ACCOMPANIED BY AN ADMISSION THAT THE 17 PROVINCES ABOUT TO HAVE A FREEDOM PARTY HEADQUARTERS WERE ONES IN WHICH THE LILY GROUP HAD PRIMARY STRENGTH. (THIS IS THE FREEDOM PARTY COMPONENT TO WHICH LOC BELONGS.) HE SAID HE WOULD LEAVE THE PROVINCES WHERE THE NHAN XA AND THE GREATER SOLIDARITY FORCE WERE PROMINENT FOR LATER ORGANIZATIONAL EFFORTS. THIS SUGGESTS THAT, FOR THE MOMENT AT LEAST, LOC FEELS MOST AT HOME IN HIS OWN BAILWICK.
BUNKER

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SECSTATE WASHDC

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